

[MacCurrie]

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"I got kind of a cold in the head," observes Mr. MacCurrie. "Had the dom thing now goin' on two weeks. And I'm beginnin' to think it's kind of a sinus, or maybe this, what they call, allergy. Doc Brady is a great one for talkin' aboot that. You ever read Doc Brady's column?"

"By God science is a wonderful thing. Fifty years ago a mon got a cold in the head, and didn't think a goddom thing aboot it and it went away. They still can't cure it, but now they know what causes it. The only goddom trouble is that whether it's allergy or a cold in the head, it stops up your nose just the same.

"But of coorse I ain't sayin' anything against the medical profession. They've made some wonderful advances since I was a young mon. And I have a lot of faith in Doc Brady at that. He has same great things to say about these vitta-mins.

"There's another thing they've made a fine improvement on. What a mon eats. When I was a young mon, you ate what you wanted until it filled you up, but now you eat stuff with the right vitta-mins. Gives you 'vite' Doc Brady says. Of coorse they're always findin' new vitta-mins and there ain't hardly a food you can think of that hasn't got one or two of them. So you can still eat pretty much what you want to. And if you can't eat good, you can get your vittamine in the form of pills."

Having made these remarks, as the saying goes, with his tongue in his cheek, Mr. MacCurrie feels the need of a bit of 2 snuff. After he has helped himself generously, he continues: "Take liver, for instance. A few years ago they didn't know liver had any value as medicine. Then they found oot it was good for people with anemia. And then the butchers found oot about it too, and it went sky high. I like liver, too, if there's anything I like it's a nice tender piece of liver."

We pause for reflection on the merits of liver as an aid to the anemic and as pure enjoyment for the epicure. Mr. MacCurrie changes the subject.

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"I see by the paper there's talk of a special town meetin'. The Selectmon has spent nearly all his road appropriation and they'll have to get more money from somewhere pretty soon. The Selectmon says they can take it from some other item in the budget and appropriate it for roads, but you know and I know goddom well they can't do that. You remember when they made up the budget they said this was every goddom cent they could spend for every department withoot a raise in the tax rate.

"Where can they take it from? If they take it from the schools, the school board will raise hell, to say nothin' of our friend Joe Philips. They can't take it from relief--they haven't got enough for that the way it is--so what are they goin' to do?

"They'll raise the taxes two mills, that's what they'll do. And the poor mon will pay most of it. When they went up from twenty-three to twenty-five mills, old MacPherson up across from us, went up two dollars a month on all his tenants. He didn't lose anything by it; he made money on it.

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"The old deevil--he had some kind of an attack the other night. It's the way he lives. You know if he can't sleep at night he'll get up and cook himself something. I suppose his stomach is all upset most of the time. Anyway he had the doctor, and the doctor told him he had some kind of a blood clot in his head. He told him to stay in bed all day and he'd come back to see him at night. It made the old mon so goddom mad he waited till it was time for the doctor to come and then he went doon and started fixin' the furnace. The doctor had to go doon the cellar to see him. That's the kind of a stubborn old deevil he is. He wouldn't believe he was sick, you see."

We are joined by Mr. Coburn, who it turns out, is once more in the ranks of the unemployed.

Mr. MacCurrie: "So George Galida come back to work, did he?"

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Mr. Coburn: "Yeah. So I lost my temporary job."

Mr. MacCurrie: "He wasn't out so very long, as sick as he was."

Mr. Coburn: "Well, George is a strong, healthy fella."

Mr. MacCurrie: "You picked a good day to begin hangin' around. It's like spring. I was up around the Brick Yard and down High Street and over through Elm just before I come in. Mon, the air is fine."

Mr. Coburn: "You like your walkin' don't you Andrew?"

Mr. MacCurrie: "It's the finest exercise there is. And it keeps me healthy, mon. My weight don't vary a damn bit from one 4 year's end to another. It's no good to be carryin' around a lot of goddam fat, you know. Walkin' keeps your weight down."

Mr. Coburn: "I was comin' down Park Street just a little while ago, and I see one of Blakeslee's big trucks carryin' a big machine over to the depot. Boy, was that thing heavy. That truck was loaded right down to the springs, and crawlin' along about ten miles an hour."

Mr. MacCurrie: "That was one of Hallden's machines. He sends 'em out west. He's hooked up with some concern out west, and they keep him pretty busy. Hallden's plant is workin' two shifts. Of course it ain't very big."

Mr. Coburn: "Who had that shop before him, Andrew?"

Mr. MacCurrie: "Didn't you ever hear of the Jewel shop? That was the old Jewel shop. They come in here just after the war and built that place. They sold stock to a lot of people in town. People thought it was goin' to be the start of a big boom for the town. They thought factories were goin' to move in here by the dozen. But the Jewel shop didn't make out so good. After it went under Hallden come here and took a lease on the place. He

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used to be a draftsman over at Plume and Atwood's. Then he got makin' machines in a place of his own doon in Waterbury, and then he come here."

Mr. Coburn: "They say he pays his help pretty good."

Mr. MacCurrie: "Yes, I guess they get pretty good money."

Mr. Coburn: "Not much like the lad up on the Torrington road. I remember when he first come to this town. He got that old 5 farm down where the state park is now. He'd do anything for a dollar, he even sold hot dogs in a road stand down there. The best break he ever got was when the state bought that farm of his. That started him in business. Now you couldn't touch him with a ten foot pole. He don't remember the days when be didn't have a dime. He pays himself twenty thousand dollars a year, but he wouldn't give his leavin's to a neighbor's starvin' dog."

Mr. MacCurrie: "They say he's a pretty tough man to work for."

Mr. Coburn: "He don't pay nothin'. Nothin'. You might as well be livin' on the town."

Mr MacCurrie: "They say the Clock shop is gettin' pretty bad."

Mr. Coburn: "So they tell me. I was talkin' to a lad the other day, he told me one of the bosses told him somebody in the office was goin' to invent a machine to do away with the job he was doin'."

Mr. MacCurrie: "What the hell's the sense in tellin' a mon a thing like that?"

Mr. Coburn: "He swore up and down it was true. He said that's the kind of things they're doin' down there. He said when you come in in the mornin' you don't know whether you're goin' to stay there all day or be sent home."

Mr. MacCurrie: "The place is goin' from bad to worse, there's no doot about it."

Mr. Coburn: "I don't think these people from out west know how to run it."

Mr. MacCurrie: "That's what they say. Well, here's the paper at last." He goes out to the hallway, comes back with the paper under his arm, resumes his seat and takes out his spectacles.

Mr. Coburn: "What's the headline tonight Andrew?"

Mr. MacCurrie: "Oh, it's about the Pope. But there's a piece here tellin' how business in pickin' up in Waterbury. So many more men employed than there was last year. I think they put that goddom thing in every time they need something to fill up the paper."

Mr. Coburn: "Yeah, well---I guess I'll go up and listen to the radio." He leaves, and Mr. MacCurrie, adjusting his chair so as to get full benefit of the light from the window, settles back comfortably with the paper.